

2020 EDITION

POCKET GUIDE TO CAPACITY BUILDING

POCKET
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CAPACITY
BUILDING
UNDER THE
UNFCCC



ecbi

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FOREWORD

For over a decade, the European Capacity Building Initiative (ecbi) has adopted a two-pronged strategy to create a more level playing field for developing countries in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): training negotiators from developing countries; and providing opportunities for senior negotiators from developing countries and Europe to interact, and build mutual trust.

The first part of the strategy focuses on providing training and support to new developing country negotiators, particularly from Least Developed Countries. The climate change negotiations are often technical and complex, and difficult for new negotiators (who are most often not climate specialists) to fully grasp even over a period of two or three years. We hold regional training workshops to bring them up to speed on the negotiations. We also organise training workshops before each Conference of Parties (COPs) to the UNFCCC, covering topics specific to that COP. To ensure continuity in our capacity building efforts, we offer bursaries to a few women negotiators to attend the negotiations and represent their country and region/grouping. Finally, we help negotiators build their analytical capacity through our publications, by teaming them up with global experts to author policy briefs and background papers.

This strategy has proven effective over time. “New” negotiators that trained in our early regional and pre-COP workshops have risen not only to become senior negotiators in the process, but also leaders of regional groups and of UNFCCC bodies and committees, and ministers and envoys of their countries. These individuals remain part of our growing alumni, and are now capacity builders themselves, aiding our efforts to

train and mentor the next generation. Their insights from once being new to the process themselves have helped us improve our training efforts.

The second ecbi strategy relies on bringing senior negotiators from developing countries and from Europe together, at the annual Oxford Seminars and the Bonn Seminars. These meetings provide an informal space for negotiators to try to understand the concerns that drive their specific national positions, and come up with solutions to drive the process forward. They have played a **vital role** in resolving some difficult issues in the negotiations.

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, ecbi produced Guides to the Agreement in English and in French. Since they proved popular with both new and senior negotiators, we developed this series of thematic Pocket Guides, to provide negotiators with a brief history of the negotiations on the topic; a ready reference to the key decisions that have already been adopted; and a brief analysis of the outstanding issues from a developing country perspective. These Guides are mainly **web-based** and updated frequently. Although we have printed copies of the English version of the Guides due to popular demand (please **write to us** if you would like copies), the online versions have the added advantage of hyperlinks to access referred material quickly.

As the threat of climate change grows rather than diminishes, developing countries will need capable negotiators to defend their threatened populations. The Pocket Guides are a small contribution to the armoury of information that they will need to be successful. We hope they will prove useful, and that we will continue to receive your feedback.

Anju Sharma

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GLOSSARY

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
CMP	Conference of Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHGs	Greenhouse gases
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LDCF	LDC Fund
LEG	LDC Expert Group
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
PCCB	Paris Committee on Capacity-building
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
SCF	Standing Committee on Finance
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TEC	Technology Executive Committee
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOSSC	UN Office for South-South Cooperation
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts

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WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building can be said to have its roots in the evolution of international development cooperation since the 1950s, with precursors in the concepts of ‘institution building’, ‘institutional strengthening’, ‘human resource development’, ‘institutional economics’, etc.¹ It has had many different names and forms. As development engineering in varied environments across the world was often a process of ‘learning by doing’, themes and strategies for ensuring effectiveness constantly kept changing. A globally accepted definition of capacity building, in particular to improve ways of measuring its effectiveness, continues to be a challenge.

Based on the experience of the US-led Marshal Plan to rebuild war-ravaged Europe after the Second World War, the US and other European countries had the notion that development could be pursued in developing countries through building and strengthening national institutions. The argument was that differences in economic growth and development among developing countries can be explained by the differing quality of institutions responsible for economic management. The focus was therefore on institution building and institutional strengthening between the 1960s and 1980s.

Until the mid-1990s, the concept attracted almost no research support within the international development community.² Although universities have traditionally been the generator and repository of ideas and knowledge, in case of capacity building this was not the case. The development agencies of the Western world led the process of its evolution and remain the storehouse of reports.

Aid agencies zeroed in on capacity building/development in the 1990s as the organising theme for development cooperation, together with 'good governance' and 'country ownership' of development assistance. The early 1990s witnessed the advent of the new concept of 'capacity building' in the international development domain. The World Bank is regarded as the initiator of this concept, though later the development agencies started using the concept of 'capacity development'. Some commentators find no basic difference between these two terms,³ while others argue that there is: capacity building is regarded as having its start from a scratch, while capacity development is viewed as having a base from where to start the process.⁴

Whatever the case, most aid agencies have defined capacity building in their own ways.⁵ But there appears to be a consensus that capacity building must include individuals, institutions, and systems that collectively enable effective and sustainable development; and that it must foster self-reliance, and focus on development of local resources.⁶ The need for 'endogenous capacity building' is increasingly recognised. Endogenous capacity building has been defined by some as a process of enhancing and retaining the capacity of developing countries in solving problems based on their wisdom, resources, policies, institutions, and social system as well as their own initiatives and governance.⁷ This includes the identification of internal needs and priorities to determine the means for building capacity, taking into account a participatory approach; ensuring that external cooperation and processes understand and take into account domestic conditions; and ensuring that social capital has been empowered and community ownership has been boosted, to ensure local acceptance and long-term sustainability.

WHAT HAVE PREVIOUS GLOBAL CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS TAUGHT US?

Bilateral and multilateral agencies led by UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank since the mid-1990s have initiated either stand-alone or mixed projects where capacity building figured somehow. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has initiated many **capacity building projects**. In addition, there have been many flagship capacity building programmes, both of past and present, by regional and bilateral agencies.

Despite all these efforts, significant gaps remain.⁸ Some analysts hold both the donors and recipients of aid responsible for the limited progress,⁹ while others argue that donors and recipient countries are not fully coordinated,¹⁰ particularly regarding principles of aid effectiveness such as mutual accountability and transparency.¹¹ Very little evidence is available on how recipient countries are managing capacity development strategies,¹² although this is being addressed to a limited extent.¹³ Capacity building efforts targeted at public sector strengthening also did not meet expectations.¹⁴ Inefficiency and ineffectiveness in capacity building initiatives associated with short-lived project-based interventions, lack of investments, and under-involvement of recipients are lingering problems,¹⁵ although the need for a longer-term approach to capacity building is increasingly **recognised**.¹⁶

According to some commentators, many governments both from the donor and recipient sides and funding agencies prefer to keep capacity building as an umbrella concept with

wide open boundaries, under which many different projects and programmes can be packaged and legitimised.¹⁷ In technical assistance programmes of capacity building, private consulting firms usually from donor countries are often commissioned to do the job. Consultants are parachuted in to organise workshops and trainings, and the job is done with the submission of a project report. While there is some change, capacity building is still often a mainly input-based, supply-driven, short-term, and ad-hoc exercise, where no capacity building 'systems' are left behind to carry the task forward.¹⁸ Some argue that such donor-driven exercises by foreign experts could harm local capacity building, weakening local ownership and relieving local staff of taking responsibility for the project.¹⁹

Experience shows that countries where development cooperation played a stimulating and facilitative, but not decisive, role managed an endogenous process of increasing capacities,²⁰ because capacities cannot be implanted from beyond, but grow within, with a gestation time. The emphasis here again is on national ownership and local leadership of the process. The question of how to grow local ownership and leadership in aided projects on capacity building still remains.

While there is no research yet on how much money is spent on capacity building for many different areas of development and environment, loose estimates suggest that one-third to one-fourth of annual official development assistance goes to capacity building, and the overwhelming share is spent by bilateral agencies.²¹ Since capacity building, as a crosscutting issue, often remains a component of most projects, it is difficult to quantify total funding specifically dedicated to capacity building. In any case, funding for capacity building remains poor.²²

Some commentators **argue** that the complex, long-term challenges of capacity development are the most important constraints for most countries, and these do not allow for ‘quick fixes’ or bureaucratically engineered solutions. Moreover, short-term technical assistance-based budgeting for capacity building is not a good avenue to fund long-term sustainable capacity building ‘systems.’²³ Partner countries can do more to identify priorities for strengthening capacities in targeted areas. Donors and agencies in turn can do more to support those priorities in coordinated ways, to strengthen country systems by using them, and to reduce donor practices that undermine the development of sustainable capacity.²⁴

Meanwhile, the landscape of development cooperation is changing, with new donors from both the North and the South, and new stakeholders – including civil society.

WHY DO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEED CAPACITY BUILDING TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE?

We already live in a world challenged by climate change. Extreme events and current and future climate uncertainty throw up several new challenges for governments, communities and individuals around the world. For instance, they must design and implement measures to mitigate climate change; adapt to climate change; deal with loss and damage due to climate change; set up credible measures to monitor climate-related parameters, and the impact of actions; adopt new technologies and methods; and raise awareness on climate change.

Developing countries often lack the human, technical, institutional and financial capacity to deal with many of these new challenges. At the same time, they must redouble development efforts to build resilience to climate impacts and ensure that recent gains are not lost due to climate change, which threatens food, water and energy security, livelihoods, and health. Government and non-government actors in these countries therefore need additional capacity, not only to deal with the added, immense challenges of climate change, but also to continue and enhance their development efforts and safeguard development gains.

Given that climate change is a global problem that most affects those who have least contributed to it, strong and effective global cooperation in building this essential capacity is critical, particularly for poor and vulnerable countries and communities, and those with least capacity.

WHAT KIND OF CAPACITIES ARE NEEDED TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE?

The complex and wide-ranging nature of the climate problem – and the solutions to help address this challenge – make the issue of capacity equally challenging. Climate-related capacity building needs also tend to constantly evolve, as climate science and policy evolve; and, moreover, can be very context-specific. Developing countries have highlighted the importance of capacity building in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – of the 139 NDCs submitted, 169 make capacity building a condition for implementation.²⁵ They have also articulated an almost overwhelming array of needs in their submissions to the global climate negotiations.²⁶ These can be broadly classified into four major categories:

- The capacity to **understand the nature of the climate problem** as it pertains to a country, such as the implications of climate change for various economic activities and livelihoods, and for human and societal well-being.
- The capacity to **formulate and implement national actions** to limit the scale of the problem through mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; and to limit the human, ecological, economic, and other societal impacts through measures to mitigate risks and adapt to them.
- The capacity to **raise, access, or mobilise funds** to implement national actions has also emerged as an important area where capacity building is needed for some countries in recent years.
- The capacity to **analyse, build consensus on, articulate**

the national interest, and report back on obligations under the UNFCCC.²⁷

While it goes without saying that building capacity within countries is critical, in some cases it may not be possible for all the relevant capacity to reside locally. For example, some Least Developed Countries (LDCs) may not be able to lead or manage climate modelling efforts aimed at understanding the manifestations of climate change within their countries. In this case, it will be essential to ensure that international climate modelling capacity responds adequately and generates the downscaled scientific information needed by these countries.

Understanding what specific issues to examine, however, will require an understanding of local issues and priorities. Since climate risks result from the interactions of climate change with local physical, biological/ecological and human/societal systems, the need for local knowledge will be critical. Here local capacity will play a major role. Similarly, monitoring and observation of climate impacts may require both international and national capacity, but local capacity will play an increasingly central role in prioritising and implementing mitigation and adaptation options in the context of national development objectives, where an understanding of the local conditions takes on primacy.

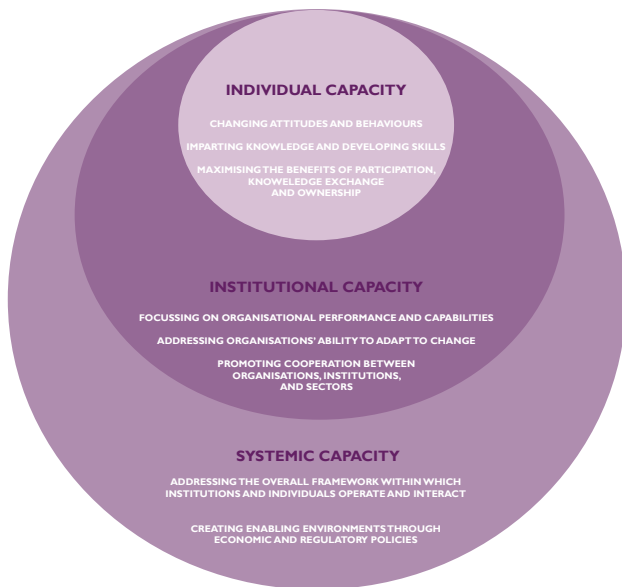
In other words, relatively 'objective' processes relating to understanding of climate phenomena (such as climate modelling) can rely on international capacity, although informed by local context and needs. But as we move towards issues where subjective judgments become important – such as which development objectives to prioritise while choosing among mitigation options, for example, or the most suitable way to implement an option – appropriate and adequate local

capacity is critical, with external actors preferably playing only a supporting role (such as providing information about good practices of policies and business models elsewhere).

Notably, while capacity resides in humans and organisations, networks and institutions that enable and guide the flow of knowledge play an important role in harnessing knowledge and gathering multiple perspectives. This is particularly true in the climate context, given the breadth and complexity of almost any aspect of challenge. Moreover, the overall framework within which the institutions and individuals operate, including for instance regulatory policies, also play an important role. There are therefore three levels at which capacity building efforts for climate change are needed: individual, institutional, and systemic (see **Figure 1**).²⁸

Individual capacity building efforts must respect existing local knowledge and know-how, while imparting specific skills, ranging, for instance, from energy auditing, installing solar photovoltaic installations, to project design and implementation, or strategic decision-making. Many of these skills can be developed through training programmes, although the more complex the skill, the more the importance of learning-by-doing, by working alongside experts over longer periods.

Institutional capacity building must take place at all levels (regional, national, and local), and include technical, scientific, and educational organisations as well as governance institutions (including ministries and other policy making and regulatory bodies). Universities, for instance, which exist even in the poorest countries, can be enabled to play an important role as generators, retainers, and disseminators of climate-related knowledge and technical capacity.²⁹

Figure 1: Levels of capacity building

Broader systemic level capacity building can, among other things, enhance the effectiveness of capacity building efforts, ensure that they are targeted at the right levels, ensure their sustainability, and put in place measure to measure and track the effectiveness of capacity building efforts.

Capacity building to address climate change should be a cumulative effort involving all three categories. The categories are not mutually exclusive, and ignoring one can impact the others. For instance, building individual capacity in the absence of institutional capacity could result in the eventual loss of the newly built capacity, as trainees seek more

permanent job opportunities elsewhere, within more stable institutional arrangements.

Over time, a set of informal principles for delivering capacity building have emerged: efforts must be country driven; build on, and respect, existing capacities; be integrated into existing processes and institutions to the extent possible; include learning by doing; and be continuous, progressive, iterative, and sustainable in the long run. Capacity building should also be seen as a comprehensive stand-alone goal as opposed to a tool to achieve some other goal. It is an end to be pursued for its own sake.

Finally, tools and metrics to measure progress and effectiveness of efforts play an important role not only in measuring progress, but also in allowing for mid-course correction.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE UNDER THE UNFCCC?

Capacity building has been part of the climate change negotiations since the adoption of the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) in 1992. UNFCCC Article 6 is dedicated to promoting education, public awareness, public access to climate change information, public participation in addressing climate change, and training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel. This Article was the main basis for subsequent decisions and activities on capacity building.

Article 9.2(d), which describes the mandate of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), requested SBSTA to provide advice “*on scientific programmes, international cooperation in research and development related to climate change, as well as on ways and means of supporting endogenous capacity-building in developing countries*”.

Capacity building is also dealt with under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) – a majority of capacity building efforts have taken place under the SBI since 2001.³⁰

► CAPACITY-BUILDING FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

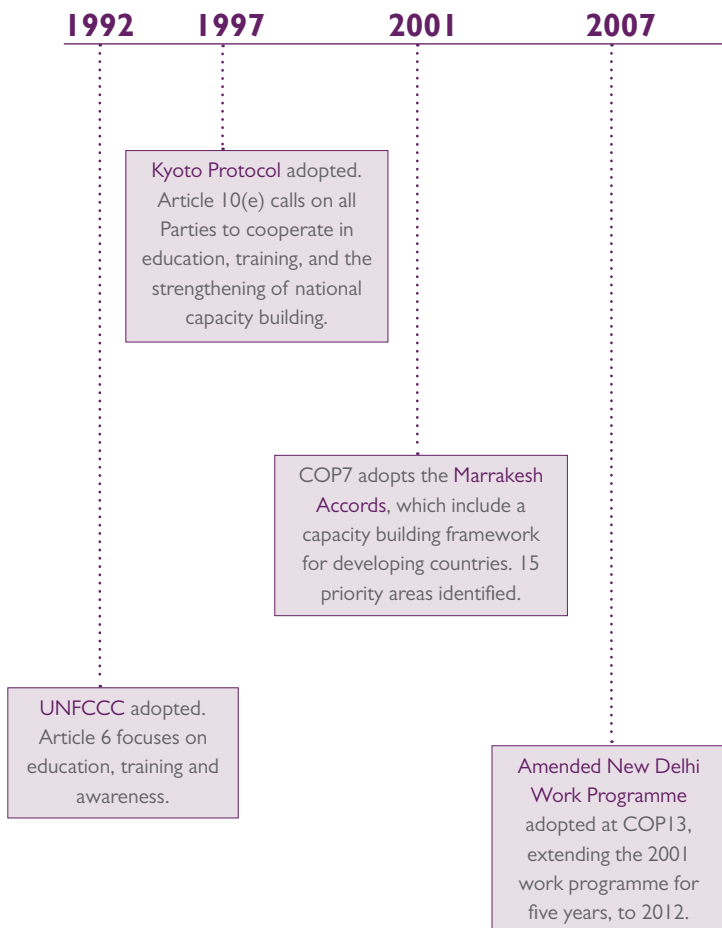
In 2001, the seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the UNFCCC adopted the **Marrakech Accords**, which include two Frameworks providing a set of guiding principles and approaches to capacity building – one in developing countries, and the other in countries with economies in transition (EITs). This Guide focuses only on the Capacity-building Framework for developing countries.

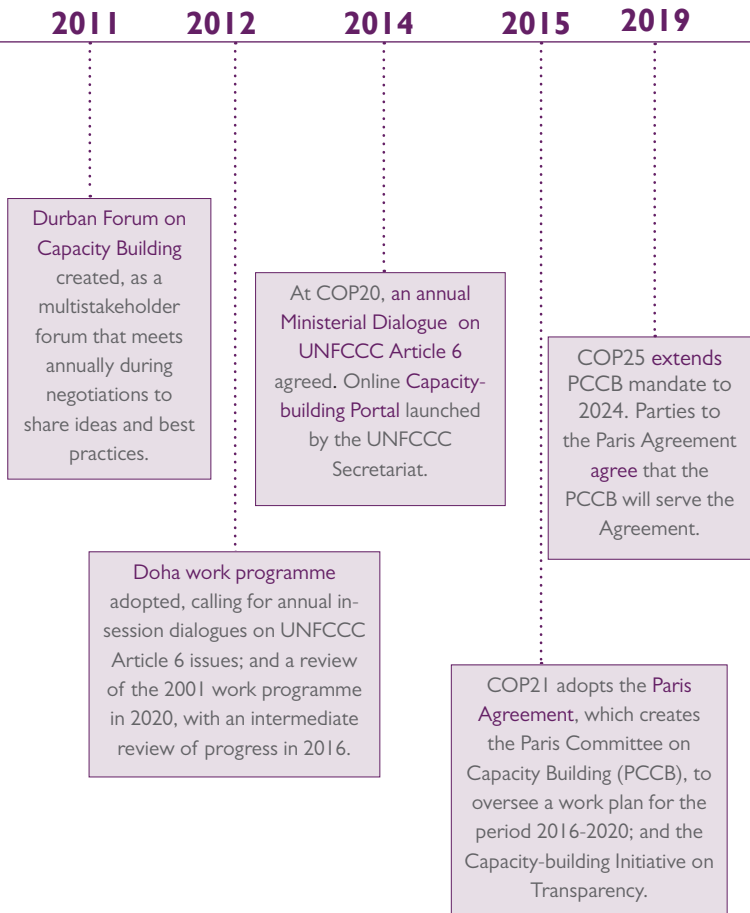
The **guiding principles** of the Framework for developing countries called for capacity building that is country-driven; involves learning by doing; and builds on existing activities. It called for an approach that is continuous, progressive, iterative, effective, efficient, integrated, and programmatic. It stressed that capacity building efforts should address the priorities of developing countries; take into account the special circumstances of LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS); and rely on, and mobilise, existing national, sub-regional and regional institutions and the private sector, to build on existing processes and endogenous capacities.

The initial scope of the Framework **included** 15 priority areas:

- Institutional capacity building, including strengthening or establishing national climate change secretariats or national focal points.
- Enhancement and/or creation of an enabling environment.
- National Communications.
- National climate change programmes.
- GHG inventories, emission database management, and systems for collecting, managing and utilising activity data and emission factors.
- Vulnerability and adaptation assessments.

TIMELINE





- Capacity building for implementation of adaptation measures.
- Assessment for implementation of mitigation options.
- Research and systematic observation, including meteorological, hydrological, and climatological services.
- Development and transfer of technology.
- Improved decision-making, including assistance for participation in international negotiations.
- Clean Development Mechanism.
- Needs arising out of the implementation of Articles 4.8 and 4.9, of the Convention.
- Education, training and public awareness.
- Information and networking, including the establishment of databases.

The Framework aimed to provide guidance to bilateral and multilateral agencies, and other organisations and institutions.³¹ In 2005, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) **agreed** that the Capacity-building Framework is also applicable to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

The secretariat produces an annual synthesis report on the information reported by Parties on the implementation of the Capacity-building Framework; and collects, compiles, and synthesises capacity-building information annually against the 15 priority areas of the Framework, and on new and emerging areas. The SBI regularly monitors and periodically reviews the implementation of the Framework. It has carried out **four reviews** since the Framework was initiated (in 2004, 2007, 2013, and 2019). A further review will be carried out in 2025.

The **first review** of the Framework for developing countries in 2004 found significant gaps, including insufficient

financial and human resources, the lack of active stakeholder participation, the need for increasing support from key decision makers, and the inability to integrate climate change into national policies.

The **second review**, initiated in 2007 and completed in 2011, noted some progress in implementation, but gaps were still found, particularly related to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. At COP17 in Durban in 2011, Parties called for capacity building to be integrated into national development strategies, plans and budgets, and networking and information sharing to be strengthened.

The **third review** of the Framework, initiated in 2015 and completed in 2016, reported progress mainly in the areas of institutional and systemic capacity building, based on information provided by the GEF and its implementing agencies. For the rest, however, it found that the crosscutting nature of capacity building made it difficult to aggregate information, and perform a quantitative and qualitative review. It noted the lack of global or standard approaches and indicators to measure, monitor and review the impact of capacity building support and action and their effectiveness. It also identified areas that were not covered by the Capacity-building Framework, such as loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, and readiness for, and access to, climate finance.

During the **fourth review**, completed in 2019 in Madrid, developing countries stressed the challenges of retaining capacity; collecting and reporting data; coordinating domestic agencies and international partners in the provision of support for capacity-building; and formulating bankable climate change projects. They also emphasised the lack of institutional capacity for climate change-related research, development, and

demonstration; and the lack of capacity to address crosscutting issues, such as gender-responsiveness and human rights. A number of emerging priority areas for capacity building were highlighted (see **Box 1**).

Despite the regular reviews, the Capacity-building Framework has not been updated and aligned with new capacity building initiatives under the Convention, resulting in the risk of duplication and lack of overall efficiency.

Box 1: Emerging priority areas

During the 2019 review of the implementation of the Capacity-building Framework, developing countries **flagged** a number of new, emerging priority areas for capacity building in their submissions, including:

- Formulating, updating, and implementing NDCs.
- Formulating long-term low-emission and climate resilient development strategies.
- Improving knowledge for addressing loss and damage.
- Establishing, improving, and consolidating transparency systems.
- Implementing the voluntary approaches in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

► KYOTO PROTOCOL

The **Kyoto Protocol** was adopted under the UNFCCC in 1997. Article 10.d calls on all Parties to the Protocol to “[c]ooperate in and promote at the international level, and, where appropriate, using existing bodies, the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national capacity building, in particular human and institutional capacities and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries, and facilitate at the national

level public awareness of, and public access to information on, climate change". The Protocol therefore elaborated scientific, institutional, and individual capacity building, and the role of all Parties, developed and developing.

In addition, the following paragraphs of Article 10 also call for cooperation among Parties in the following elements related to capacity building:

- Article 10.b.ii calls on non-Annex I Parties to submit information on programmes which contain measures that contribute to addressing climate change and its adverse impacts, including capacity building.
- Article 10.c calls for cooperation in the promotion of effective modalities for the development, application, and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies, know-how, practices, and processes pertinent to climate change; and for Parties to take all practicable steps to promote, facilitate, and finance, as appropriate, the transfer of, or access to, these technologies, in particular to developing countries.
- Article 10.d calls for cooperation to promote the development and strengthening of endogenous capacities and capabilities to participate in international and intergovernmental efforts, programmes, and networks on research and systematic observation
- Article 10.e calls for cooperation in, and promotion of, the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national capacity building, in particular human and institutional capacities and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries, and facilitate at the national level public awareness of, and public access to information on,

climate change.

Article 11 of the Kyoto Protocol, meanwhile, relates to the provision of finance, including for capacity building, while prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable and those with special needs and circumstances. The Capacity-building Framework under the Convention was to include efforts related to the Kyoto Protocol ([Decision 29/CMP.1](#)). The fourth comprehensive review for capacity building under the Kyoto Protocol will be initiated in 2020.

► DURBAN FORUM ON CAPACITY-BUILDING

Responding to the needs and gaps identified both in the second review of the Capacity-building Framework and annual discussions under the SBI, the [Durban Forum on Capacity-building](#) was established in 2011, at COP17 in Durban.

The Forum is an annual event which takes place during the intersessional meetings of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, open to government and non-government stakeholders. It is attended by negotiators and representatives from other UN bodies, the operating entities of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism, multilateral development banks, and civil society representatives, among others, providing an opportunity for coordination. It aims to provide an overview of capacity building efforts that have been undertaken, and collect feedback to input into the comprehensive review of capacity building under the Convention.³²

Nine annual Forums have taken place between 2012 and 2020. Each Forum focuses on a different area of capacity building – the focus areas are [decided](#) on the basis of input from countries. Following [Decision 16/CP.23](#) in 2017, the focus areas of the Forum will be aligned with the annual focus

areas of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB), to avoid duplication and ensure cross-fertilisation.³³

The eighth Durban Forum in June 2019, for instance, focused on strengthening institutions at the national level to support capacity building activities for the implementation of NDCs in developing countries. The **key messages** from the 2019 Forum include: the important role played by academia in retaining capacities within developing countries; the need to enhance coherence and coordination among the different capacity building providers and users; and the importance of developing a clear baseline to assess capacity building efforts and activities.³⁴

The **ninth Forum** took place virtually in June 2020, and focused on ensuring coherence and coordination of actions and support for capacity building to support the implementation of the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement. Developing countries highlighted the challenges they face in keeping up with current reporting requirements under the Convention, and the need for institutional capacity building. The Forum discussed, among other things, how to measure the effectiveness of action.

The synthesis reports³⁵ prepared before³⁶ and after³⁷ each Forum are an important input into the UNFCCC negotiations on capacity building, the comprehensive reviews of the Capacity-building Framework described earlier in this section, and the work of the PCCB (described later).

► DOHA WORK PROGRAMME ON ARTICLE 6

UNFCCC Article 6 calls for education, training, and public awareness related to climate change and its effects. It calls on all countries to promote educational and public awareness programmes, public access to information on climate change,

public participation, and training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel. It also calls for international cooperation in the development and exchange of educational and public awareness material; and the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national institutions and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in the field of climate change.

In 2012, the eight-year [Doha work programme on Article 6](#) was launched at COP18 in Doha ([Decision 15/CP.18](#)) to coordinate action, share best practices, identify needs, and provide recommendations on this aspect of capacity building.³⁸ The scope of the work programme covered six themes that were listed in an annex to the Decision: education; training; public awareness; public access to information; public participation; and international cooperation. The GEF was asked to provide financial resources to developing countries to support the implementation of the work programme, and two reviews were scheduled: an intermediate review in 2016, and a final one in 2020.

The SBI was also requested to hold annual in-session [dialogues](#) on UNFCCC Article 6 to share experiences and exchange ideas, best practices, and lessons learned; and countries were requested to designate and support national focal points for Article 6 activities. For the purposes of the dialogues, the six thematic areas are clustered into two focal areas: education and training; and public awareness, public participation and public access to information. International cooperation is considered a crosscutting theme for both focal areas. The dialogues produce recommendations for future action.

The activities under the work programme were labelled Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) from 2016 onwards, following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, and consolidated with similar efforts under the Agreement (described below) in 2018.³⁹ In 2019, the SBI proposed draft Terms of Reference for the review of the Doha work programme.

► PARIS AGREEMENT

The 2015 Paris Agreement deals with capacity building mainly under Article 11, though capacity building elements are also mentioned in other Articles, in particular Article 12 (on climate change awareness and education), and Article 13 (on the enhanced transparency framework).

The five paragraphs of Article 11 lay down the goals, guiding principles, and procedural obligations of all Parties to the Agreement with regard to capacity building. The needs of LDCs and SIDS are highlighted (Article 11.1), and the Article calls for efforts to be country-driven, guided by lessons learned, effective, iterative, participatory, crosscutting, and gender-responsive (Article 11.2). It further calls on developed country Parties to support capacity building in developing countries (Article 11.3), and developing countries to regularly communicate progress made on implementing capacity building plans, policies, actions, or measures (Article 11.4). The first Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1) is requested to consider and adopt a decision on the initial institutional arrangements for capacity building. Related to this Article, paragraph (§)71 of Paris Decision 1/CP.21 decided to establish the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB).

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement echoes UNFCCC Article 6, and calls on Parties to cooperate in enhancing

climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation, and public access to information. As noted in the earlier section, these activities are now labelled Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE).

Article 13.15, meanwhile, calls for support to be provided for the building of transparency-related capacity of developing country Parties on a continuous basis. §84 of [Decision 1/CP.21](#) further established the [Capacity-building Initiative on Transparency](#) (CBIT) to support the implementation of this Article.

PARIS COMMITTEE ON CAPACITY BUILDING

The [Paris Committee on Capacity Building](#) (PCCB) was established in 2015 by Paris [Decision 1/CP.21](#), to address current and emerging capacity gaps and needs, and enhance capacity building efforts including with regard to coherence and coordination of activities under the Convention and [\(from December 2019\)](#) activities under the Paris Agreement.

According to a [technical paper](#) by the secretariat, a key role of the PCCB is to coordinate and cooperate with constituted bodies and operating entities through, for example, dialogue, provision of technical inputs on thematic issues, analysis of information, and information-sharing.⁴⁰

§73 of [Decision 1/CP.21](#) also launched a workplan on capacity building for the period 2016-2020, to consider nine elements: increasing synergies and avoiding duplication; identifying capacity gaps; promoting tools and methodologies for implementation; fostering global, regional, national, and sub-national cooperation; identifying and collecting good practices and lessons learned; promoting country ownership; identifying opportunities to strengthen capacity at the national, regional, and subnational level; fostering dialogue,

coordination, collaboration, and coherence among relevant processes and initiatives; and providing guidance to the Secretariat on the online [Capacity-building Portal](#).

The [Terms of Reference](#) for the PCCB were agreed by Parties at COP22, in Marrakech, in 2016, and the first meeting of the PCCB took place in May 2017.⁴¹ The [rules of procedure](#), working modalities, and a [rolling workplan](#) for 2017–2019 were [agreed](#) in November 2017. The PCCB reports back to the COP and CMA through annual [technical progress reports](#) submitted to the SBI.

Activities relating to the PCCB take place annually in three settings – during the annual PCCB meetings, at the Durban Forum during the intersessional meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies, and at a [Capacity-building Hub](#) held in the margins of the COP. Additional events such as regional climate weeks are also held.

The [Capacity-building Hub](#) was initiated by the PCCB at COP24 in Katowice, in response to calls for more time and space for informal and formal discussions on capacity building, in order to exchange knowledge on case studies, success stories, lessons learned, and how to support capacity-building in developing countries. The Hub, which takes place annually [since 2019](#), aims to foster dialogue, coordination, collaboration, and coherence among experts, scholars, and activists at local and global levels.

A [PCCB Network](#) was created in April 2020, as a voluntary association of interested stakeholders engaged in climate-related capacity-building who can share information on good practices, contribute to the work of PCCB in fulfilling its mandate, and seek to connect with their peers across sectors and regions. The Network aims to foster synergies and

enhance coherence and coordination in capacity building efforts.

The PCCB has established four **working groups**:

- Coherence and coordination on capacity building under and outside the Convention.
- Crosscutting issues such as gender responsiveness, human rights, indigenous peoples' knowledge, the role of cities, youth, and relevant elements of Action for Climate Empowerment.
- Awareness-raising, communications, and stakeholder engagement.
- Identifying capacity gaps and needs.

It also provides guidance to the secretariat on the **Capacity-building Portal** which **includes** capacity building initiatives by stakeholders, to foster global, regional, and sub-national cooperation.

The PCCB decides on an annual focus area for its work. For the first three years (2017-2019), the focus area **was** capacity-building activities for the implementation of NDCs. In 2020, the **focus** is on coherence and coordination of capacity-building activities for implementing NDCs (**Decision 8/CP.25**).⁴² In 2021, the focus area **will be** building capacity to facilitate the coherent implementation of NDCs in the context of national development plans.

Following a **review** at COP25 in Madrid, in 2019, the term of the PCCB was **extended** for another five years.⁴³ Three priority areas were listed for this period:

- Enhance coherence and coordination of capacity building under the Convention to avoid duplication of efforts, including by bodies under and outside the Convention that engage in activities related to capacity building,

as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates.

- Identify capacity gaps and needs, both current and emerging, and recommend ways to address them.
- Promote awareness-raising, knowledge- and information-sharing and stakeholder engagement with bodies and relevant actors under and outside the Convention, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates.

The COP also provided guidance on key activities to be undertaken under each priority area in the annex to the decision. The CMA decided, at the same meeting, that the PCCB will develop a workplan to address these areas, for consideration during COP26. It was agreed that the need for further extension for the PCCB will be reviewed again at COP30 in 2024.

ACTION FOR CLIMATE EMPOWERMENT

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement echoes some of the more detailed content in the UNFCCC's Article 6 on education, training, and public awareness. Paris Decision 1/CP.21 also includes two paragraphs related to this Article, but under the heading of capacity building (§§82 and 83). §82 calls on all Parties to ensure that education, training, and public awareness, as reflected in UNFCCC Article 6 and in Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, are adequately considered in their contribution to capacity building. §83 invites CMA1 to explore ways of enhancing the implementation of training, public awareness, public participation, and public access to information.

In Katowice, in Decision 17/CMA.1 (§§1, 3, 5-11), it was agreed that efforts under Article 12 will be referred to as

Box 2: Points of contention

The capacity building discussions are not usually as controversial as other elements negotiated under the Convention, though disagreements do take place on issues like which capacity gaps should be prioritised, and how they should be addressed.

For instance, during the Paris Agreement negotiations, while most developing countries were focused on a broader range of capacity gaps, many developed countries were focused mainly on capacity building for transparency of (mitigation) action. In the final Agreement, the provision of finance for the former (under Article 11) is merely a recommendation (“*should*”), while the provision of support for transparency is an obligation (“*shall*”). Moreover, the provision of support focuses more on transparency of action, than on support provided and received.⁴⁴

The scope of action of capacity building bodies, and the sources of information for review processes is also often contested. For instance, in the run up to the fourth comprehensive review of the Capacity-building Framework, developing countries *wanted to include* interviews, surveys, and focussed discussions with National Focal Points for capacity building. Developed countries, on the other hand, *wanted to limit* the sources to reports from existing institutions and to submissions from countries and other stakeholders. The latter view prevailed.

In another discussion on the objective of the review, developed countries simply wanted to take stock of progress and assess the effectiveness of implementation of the Framework. Developing countries wanted to explore ways to enhance the implementation of capacity building activities. In this instance, the latter (developing country) view prevailed in §5 of the *Terms of Reference* for the review.

Discussions on the activities of the PCCB were also contentious. Developed countries *wanted* a more conservative mandate for the PCCB, while the LDCs, for instance, wanted it to extend to institutional strengthening and capacity building at the local level, with a discussion on the financial resources available to the PCCB to carry out this work effectively.⁴⁵ *Decision 9/CP.25* does not expressly prohibit local level action in the Annex to the decision, which outlines the priorities and activities of the PCCB, but does not encourage it either.

Finally, decisions with budgetary implications tended to be controversial. For instance, developing countries *wanted* the PCCB to have its own allocation within the UNFCCC budget, but this was opposed by developed countries.

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) and to a large extent be consolidated with activities under UNFCCC Article 6. The COP will include efforts related to implementation of Article 12 when it reviews the Doha work programme on Article 6 in 2020. It was agreed that the focal points nominated under Article 6 of the UNFCCC will also serve as focal points under Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, and will be referred to as ‘ACE Focal Points’ in the context of the Paris Agreement as well.

In 2016, a set of flexible **guidelines** were provided by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNFCCC, to accelerate solutions through education, training, and public awareness.⁴⁶

CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY

Article 13.15 of the Paris Agreement stipulates that “[s]upport shall also be provided for the building of transparency-related capacity of developing country parties on a continuous basis”. §84 of **Decision 1/ CP.21** establishes a Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) for this purpose, to build the institutional and technical capacity of developing countries to meet the transparency requirements under Article 13. CBIT will:

- Strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities.
- Provide relevant tools, training, and assistance.
- Assist in the improvement of transparency over time.

§86 calls on the **GEF to provide support** for the establishment and operation of CBIT. The GEF Council approved the establishment and programmatic directions of

the CBIT Trust Fund in June 2016, which had received US\$ 63 million in contributions as of November 2019. 58 CBIT projects were approved by this date, with priority for projects submitted from countries that are most in need of capacity building for transparency-related actions, in particular the LDCs and SIDS.

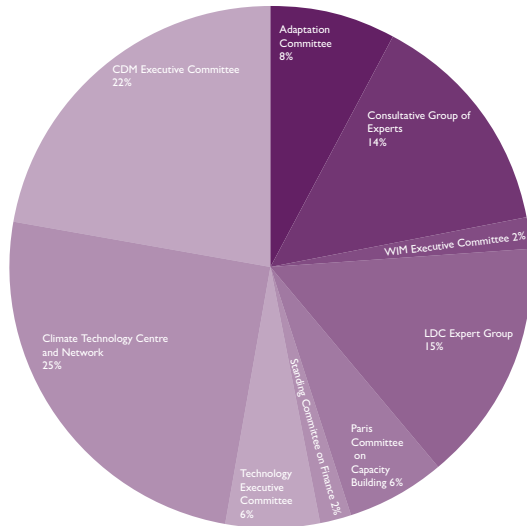
An **online platform** for CBIT facilitates coordination and knowledge management. Unusually, the implementation of CBIT is assessed as part of GEF reporting. Efforts are also underway to identify opportunities for collaboration between the CBIT and PCCB.⁴⁷

OTHER INITIATIVES

Capacity building efforts also often receive inputs from **other bodies**. There are several other thematic, advisory, and financial entities involved in capacity building under the Convention (see **Figure 2**). The thematic and advisory entities and constituted bodies include the **Adaptation Committee**; **Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)**; **Consultative Group of Experts (CGE)**; **Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM)**; **Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)**; **LDC Expert Group**; **Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)**; **Technology Executive Committee (TEC)**; and the **Facilitative Working Group on Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform**.

The **financial entities** involved in capacity building include the operating entities of the Convention's financial mechanism: the **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, which also manages the **LDC Fund (LDCE)** and the **Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)**; the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**; and the **Adaptation Fund**.

Figure 2: Capacity building activities of constituted bodies under the Convention



Source: UNFCCC (2019). *Coherence and coordination of capacity-building activities of constituted bodies and in other relevant processes under the Convention*. Technical Paper.

Capacity building for climate change is also part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, on climate change. **Target 13.b** calls for the promotion of mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in LDCs and SIDS, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalised communities.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS?

Negotiations on the initial institutional arrangements for capacity building under the Paris Agreement have been completed under [Decision 3/CMA.2](#) and [Decision 8/CP.25](#). The discussions on capacity building now revolve around a review cycle where information is gathered from Parties on capacity building needs, activities, and gaps (see **Box 3**); assessed by the different bodies; and mandates, activities, and terms of reference are adjusted accordingly.

The main issues at the heart of these discussions generally revolve around the following:

- Scale of, and access to, finance for capacity building.
- Coherence and coordination between efforts under different work programmes and bodies.
- Monitoring of implementation and impact of capacity building support, particularly with regard to retaining capacities.

These three issues are closely interlinked. For instance, the PCCB workplan, to be agreed at COP26, should include activities, deliverables, timelines, and expected results (§16, [Decision 9/CP.25](#)). These will potentially influence the amount of funding the PCCB needs, as will emerging needs and gaps that arise during the reviews of progress. Discussions on these three issues will likely be replicated under the different capacity building bodies under the UNFCCC, across review cycles.

Box 3: Sources of information on capacity building under the UNFCCC

Countries submit information on capacity building efforts and gaps in documents such as their National Communications, Biennial Update Reports, Biennial Reports, and National Adaptation Plans. They also directly make submissions on capacity building, for instance in response to calls during the review of Capacity-building Framework or for its annual report. These submissions are synthesised by the secretariat. In addition, capacity building processes within the UNFCCC produce technical and annual reports. Sources of information on the status of capacity building under the UNFCCC include:

- The **comprehensive review** of the implementation of the Capacity-building Framework in developing countries.
- Annual **synthesis reports** by the secretariat, on the implementation of the Capacity-building Framework in developing countries.
- Annual **Technical Progress Reports** of the PCCB.
- Annual **reports by the secretariat** on the Durban Forum on Capacity-building.
- Technical papers and reports produced by **Working Group 4** of the PCCB (on identifying capacity gaps and needs).

Other bodies, such as the LDC Expert Group (LEG), CGE, and GEF also produce reports that include information on capacity building needs and gaps.

► FINANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

A perennial issue in the capacity building negotiations is that of finance – both the scale of finance available, and access to finance. For instance, in their **submissions** on the review of the PCCB, the LDC Group, and Africa Group called for adequate finance for the PCCB to implement its workplan, and carry out its work diligently, efficiently, and effectively.⁴⁸ These echo similar calls made during **consultations** for the creation of a PCCB network, and in the context of the Doha Work Programme, ACE, and the Capacity-building Framework for developing countries.

A second recurring issue relates to problems in accessing funds that are available for implementation. The complicated

web of funding bodies, procedures, and safeguards, as well as undefined streams of finance, make it **difficult** for countries, in particular LDCs, to access finance.⁴⁹ Often, even the process of applying for funds requires capacity building, and has been **flagged** as a priority area by developing countries.⁵⁰ It has also been raised in the context of the LDC Expert Group – a 2020 **synthesis** of Party submissions notes that LDCs cannot access support because of the complexity of the process for accessing funds from the GCF, among other things. The Adaptation Committee has sought to address capacity gaps in accessing funding for adaptation by issuing a **call for submissions**.

A further issue relates to the specific areas and activities for which capacity building is funded – these are discussed later.

Box 4: Capacity building support from the Financial Mechanism

In an effort to address the capacity gaps in developing countries to access funding and implement activities, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund provide 'readiness funding'.

The GCF **Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme** supports developing countries to strengthen their institutional capacities, governance mechanisms, and planning and programming frameworks. It provides grants and technical assistance to National Designated Authorities NDAs and/or focal points through a simplified process, to enhance the capacity of national institutions to efficiently engage with GCF. All developing country Parties to the UNFCCC can access readiness funding of up to US\$ 300,000, but at least 50% of the available readiness support will go to particularly vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS, and African States. The GCF is also piloting **Enhanced Direct Access** (EDA) as a methodology to provide funding to sub-national actors.

The Adaptation Fund also provides **readiness funding** to help strengthen the capacity of national and regional implementing entities to receive and manage climate finance.

► COHERENCE AND COORDINATION

The current fragmented architecture for capacity building under the UNFCCC is the result of both historical happenstance and compromise. As a result of the fragmentation, however, some tensions arise in the negotiations on which capacity building body should do what, which activities should be prioritised by each body, and how duplication should be avoided.

Among the work areas that deal with capacity building, the Capacity-building Framework and Doha Work Programme, both under the Convention, outline specific capacity building activities, while one of the central roles of the PCCB is to promote coherence, coordination, and collaboration. Towards this end, the PCCB **reports** to both the COP and CMA. However, the Parties in both of these bodies are not identical, and hence the priority issues identified under the Convention and by the PCCB could differ. One governing body, for instance, may be more willing to address capacity issues related to loss and damage than the other. Or the CMA may consider capacity building for the voluntary approaches under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement to be a priority, while the COP may not. It is unclear how such differences will be reconciled. Moreover, given its limited resources, the PCCB could get overburdened if it receives very different requests from the COP and CMA.

Another issue relates to the overall mandate of the PCCB, and the activities it can undertake. Developing countries, particularly LDCs, would like the PCCB to **support efforts** at the national level. Other Parties would like to limit its mandate to high-level coordination and events. The PCCB activities agreed in **Decision 9/CP.25** refer to national action only in the context of promotion of stakeholder engagement to foster

exchange on capacity building at the national and regional levels. Further discussions on this issue will take place when the PCCB workplan is discussed at COP26.

Finally, given its crosscutting nature, capacity building is also undertaken by other bodies under and outside the UNFCCC, as noted earlier. The PCCB has initiated work on enhancing coherence and coordination between these bodies, **including through:**

- Discussions with stakeholders on coherence and coordination during the second Capacity-building Hub at COP25.
- A roundtable at COP25 attended by members of various constituted bodies both under and outside the Convention, to explore views on enhancing coherence and coordination of capacity- building related activities of constituted bodies, and also discussing how to streamline activities of operating entities to enhance cooperation.
- A **technical paper** on coherence and coordination.⁵¹
- The launch on the PCCB Network, which allows coordination with stakeholders outside the Convention.

A **synthesis report** on the capacity-building work of bodies established under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol by the secretariat informs the work of the PCCB on coordination within the Convention.⁵²

The PCCB is also considering the launch of an **informal coordination mechanism**, to define common areas of interest, increase synergies, and reduce duplication of efforts. Discussion were **held** on this mechanism at the virtual PCCB meeting in 2020.

► MONITORING AND REVIEW TO ASSESS PROGRESS

Well-developed and well applied metrics to measure capacity serve as an essential tool to gauge progress, and as an analytical base to understand patterns and determinants of successful capacity building. While the need for monitoring and review of the impacts of capacity building efforts to assess their impacts is **recognised**, progressing work in this area continues to remain a challenge, as noted in **Decision 10/CP.25**.

Small beginnings have been made under different bodies on this issue, it has not progressed, possibly due to lack of a strong mandate from Parties, and lack of resources. **Decision 16/CP.22** invited the PCCB to take into consideration previous work undertaken on indicators for capacity building. Initial **discussions** on best practices and available tools or methodologies for assessing the impact and effectiveness of capacity building activities were held at the eight Durban Forum in June 2019. Initial indicators have also been **proposed** under the Doha work programme.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN GAPS IN EXISTING CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS?

While old capacity gaps, such as those related to data collection and analysis, persist, new gaps also emerge over time – for instance, the technical capacity needs related to the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement; assess and address loss and damage due to climate change; and participate in voluntary cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.⁵³

A 2020 [synthesis report](#) on the implementation of the Capacity-building Framework identifies several such gaps, including *inter alia*.⁵⁴

- Individual and institutional capacity in government departments, including, in particular, gaps related to inter-agency and cross-sectoral coordination, and mainstreaming of climate considerations into national plans and budgets.
- Technical and institutional capacity in areas such as GHG emissions accounting, research and systematic observation, standardised data generation, collection and analysis, risk modelling, and vulnerability and adaptation assessments.
- Institutional capacity to enhance the resilience of key sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, transport, health, infrastructure, forestry, and waste.
- The capacities of policy makers to address crosscutting issues such as gender responsiveness, human rights, and just transitions.

- The capacities of local governments and communities, particularly to address adaptation.
- Institutional capacity to identify, address, research, and act on resilience, adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage.
- Public awareness and support for climate action.
- International support to build and retain individual and institutional capacity to prepare, implement, and report on NDCs.

These capacity constraints have been **attributed variously** to inadequate financial and human resources; lack of ownership and leadership; lack of coordination and institutional frameworks, and fragmentation of capacity building efforts; and ad hoc, short-term, project-based approaches to capacity building.

The generation, collection, analysis, and standardisation of quality data related to adaptation and mitigation continues to be a persistent challenge. Parties have highlighted, in the fourth review of the implementation of the Capacity-building Framework in developing countries and in recent reviews of the Doha work programme and PCCB, that addressing this requires a long-term programmatic approach. Antigua and Barbuda, for instance, is using support from CBIT to **move away** from a project-by-project approach to data collection, to the establishment of a permanent national registry to monitor NDC implementation, track climate change impacts, and institutionalise the national transparency framework across sectors.⁵⁵

Finally, as noted earlier, 169 countries have highlighted capacity building as a key enabler for implementing their NDCs, but they have not clearly articulated their capacity building needs. Greater detail in future NDCs could help identify gaps and focus international efforts to deliver the capacity.

HOW CAN GLOBAL CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS BE IMPROVED?

The key to successful implementation of capacity building will eventually rely on a keen understanding of national and local needs and challenges. This is broadly recognised, including in the Paris Agreement, which calls for ‘country-driven’ capacity building, based on and responsive to national needs, while fostering country ownership (Article 11.2). The **mandate** of the PCCB also revolves around identifying and addressing needs and gaps in capacity building. Moreover, long-term, sustainable systems will have to replace the current consultancy and project-driven approach where any gains dissipate due to a lack of retention systems.

The ultimate indicator of judging the success of climate change capacity building should be whether in-country capacity systems and capacity suppliers have been developed at the national level, along with the appropriate arrangements for international flows of knowledge and other resources.

► NATIONAL AND LOCAL NEEDS

Over time, the locus of capacity building efforts, including the defining of capacity needs, must shift to the national and local levels, where there is a greater understanding of both needs and systemic strengths and challenges. More emphasis should also be placed on capacity retention. Potential repositories and custodians of this capacity likely already exist in countries, including academic, government, and non-government organisations at the local and national levels. For instance, the **LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change** aims

to capacitate LDCs by developing a knowledge sharing and capacity development programme on adaptation to climate change in universities and training institutes in LDCs.

The approach of the Technology Mechanism to understand local needs can be instructive in the capacity building context. The TEC conducted a [survey](#) to understand national and local needs and, based on this, suggested general strategies to guide all capacity building activities. The strategies emphasise, among other things, a participatory approach, based on an understanding of internal conditions and incorporation of local and indigenous knowledge; partnerships between multiple sectors; facilitating access to finance; and monitoring progress.⁵⁶ To ensure a participatory and country-driven approach, the Technology Mechanism relies on Technology Needs Assessments prepared by countries to identify their national needs and priorities (see the *Pocket Guide to Technology under the UNFCCC* for more information).

Similar needs assessments for capacity building can help identify national and local capacity needs, along with existing knowledge and strengths, and opportunities for sharing knowledge and best practices within and across regions.

The NDCs can also serve as an instrument to identify national needs, if developing countries are more specific on their capacity building needs in future NDCs. The PCCB [initiated](#) a discussion on a [concept note](#) and draft toolkit for national assessments of capacity gaps and needs related to the NDCs during its 2020 virtual meeting.⁵⁷ Further work will continue intersessionally, with a view to agreeing on a final concept note and draft implementation plan by the end of 2020. It is important that this process does not become just a one-off assessment exercise aimed at producing a single document, but is an ongoing national cycle of assessing

existing capacities, gaps, and needs; monitoring and evaluating progress on the basis of reliable indicators; and changing in response to monitoring or evaluation results, or evolving capacity needs.

Efforts will also have to be made to ensure that these assessments reflect not only national, but also local, needs. Moreover, countries should be able to determine their own climate-related priorities, whether those relate to mitigation, adaptation, or loss and damage, and should not be limited by the PCCB's current focus on the NDCs. Although these different elements can also be included in the NDCs, the national capacity assessments should also include capacity building needs related, for instance, to National Adaptation Plans. Stronger linkages with new initiatives under the Convention that aim to bridge the global to local gap, like the [Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform](#), can help understand and address the capacity needs of specific vulnerable communities.

The provision of adequate resources to institutionalise this cycle and to build national and local ownership will be critical, particularly for LDCs. The use of existing institutional and coordinating mechanisms and stakeholder networks where possible can help to keep costs low, and also ensure longer-term sustainability.

► ACCESS TO FINANCE

Improved access to finance for capacity building, not only at the regional and national level but also at the sub-national/local level, is a priority. This will involve simplifying access procedures, and enhancing the capacity of multiple stakeholders at various levels to access funds. It can be achieved through, for instance:

- Pooling of resources and channelling them through multilateral entities with simplified procedures.
- Using mechanisms such as the GCF's **Enhanced Direct Access** modality to promote sub-national programmatic access to funds.
- Providing guidance to bilateral and multilateral funders to complement UNFCCC efforts, and to ensure funding is available across all thematic areas where capacity building is needed.
- Promoting **local level funds** for capacity development.

Efforts such as the **NDC Finance Initiative for the Caribbean** launched by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and the government of Saint Lucia can serve as examples to make funds more accessible at the regional level.

Engaging philanthropic organisations and civil society entities more systematically in capacity building efforts could help to harness additional resources and follow a more sustainable approach. Such organisations may have more agility, flexibility, and freedom with which to operate, and to take a long-term perspective since they do not have to deliver immediate returns synchronised with government policy or political cycles, or shareholder expectations. Enhancing the capacity of local communities and governments to work with the private sector can also contribute.

Enhancing coordination between bodies such as the Executive Committee of the WIM, the Adaptation Committee, finance-related bodies such as the SCF, and the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism is important to ensure that funds are available for capacity building in areas that are a priority for developing countries, such as adaptation and loss and damage.

► COHERENCE AND COORDINATION, GLOBAL AND NATIONAL

The capacity building architecture under the UNFCCC will need to be updated by Parties to avoid duplication, to avoid conflicts on the mandates of different bodies, and to avoid overburdening those that report to more than one governing body. The mandate of older bodies may need to be revisited and refreshed. This higher level of coherence and coordination will need to be addressed by Parties – it cannot be addressed by the PCCB, for instance, as part of its current mandate to enhance coherence and coordination.

The efforts to enhance coherence and reduce duplication must also extend well beyond the activities under the Convention, and could, for instance, look for synergies with, and lessons learned from, not only Target 13.b of the SDGs, mentioned earlier, but also efforts under Target 17.9, which aims to *“enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation”*.

At the very least, the fragmentation on the top should not negatively impact action on the ground, and efforts should be made to encourage integrated approaches to implementation.

Improved coherence and coordination in capacity building approaches and activities is also necessary at the national level. The 2021 focus area of the PCCB, to build capacity to facilitate coherent implementation of NDCs, provides space for the PCCB to work on this area. The **PCCB Network** could also play an important role in this context, as could the guidance on national capacity assessments, when it is finalised.

► INDICATORS TO TRACK IMPACT

Harmonised indicators to track progress on capacity building are essential not only for capacity building efforts, but also for measuring the impact of global efforts. Without clear indicators, the PCCB, for instance will find it difficult to provide inputs on capacity building to the Global Stocktake synthesis report in 2022. However, currently, none of the capacity building bodies under the Convention is clearly mandated to develop such indicators. This is a considerable body of work and a clear mandate from the governing bodies – and adequate resources – will be necessary to undertake it.

A 2019 [submission](#) by the World Resources Institute noted that *“Parties are still struggling to regularly track and evaluate their capacity-building activities... mainly due to lack of agreed indicators, metrics and tools to assess progress, identify gaps, and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation in a consistent manner and the lack of resources to support such regular comprehensive reviews”*.⁵⁸

There have also been [calls for](#) a periodic assessment report on capacity building by the PCCB, to consider, among other things, methodological issues for measurement, reporting, and verification of capacity building, and to review progress made in enhancing capacity building during an implementation period.⁵⁹

The indicators will need to be coordinated across the plurality of forms and themes of capacity building, and across different national contexts. Stakeholders across themes, including local bodies represented through institutions such as the LCIPP, should be a part of their design, review, and implementation.

► SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

A more systematic approach to South-South and triangular cooperation under the UNFCCC could bolster capacity building efforts and address the capacity building needs of countries with similar challenges in a more targeted and effective manner. Efforts are already underway by other agencies, for instance by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), which is coordinating the implementation of the South-South Cooperation Action Plan of the UN Secretary-General's Climate Change Engagement Strategy. The UNOSSC has developed a global knowledge sharing and partnership-brokering platform called the [South-South Galaxy](#).

► NETWORKS, PARTNERSHIPS, PEER LEARNING, AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Networks and partnerships can be an effective way to promote peer learning; share local knowledge and experiences; build synergies between entities and across application sectors and domains; and identify areas for collaboration.⁶⁰ They can also contribute to better understanding national and local capacity needs.

The Durban Forum has [served](#) as a platform for exploring linkages with academia and research. Further discussions on how the information can be utilised, and how these linkages can be enhanced, will be useful. The PCCB initiated a *Strategic Plan for Stakeholder Engagement, Communications and Resource Mobilization* in 2019 to identify and map stakeholders. The Plan led to the initiation of the [PCCB Network](#) to support individuals and institutions, and share best practices and knowledge.

To further encourage knowledge-sharing and information on experience, good practices, and lessons learned, existing

efforts that engage with national-level actors could be built upon and expanded. These include the PCCB Network and the [Capacity-building Portal](#). The [Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action](#) also aims to enable collaboration between governments and cities, regions, businesses, and investors. The [LDCs University Consortium on Climate Change](#) aims to increase the capacity of LDCs to build their own capacity to address climate change through research, knowledge sharing and education.

► TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES

Further tools and methodologies will also need to be developed and disseminated to establish an overall vision for capacity building at the national level, implement policies and programmes to achieve that vision, integrate capacity building activities into budgets and sector programmes, engage stakeholders, and monitor and evaluate progress. Some tools already exist – such as the [UNDP Capacity Assessment Methodology](#), aimed at understanding how to monitor and assess impacts. It views capacity development not as a one-off intervention, but an iterative process of design-application-learning-adjustment.

► STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders can play a vital role in providing, enhancing, and retaining climate change-related capacity. Strategic stakeholder engagement at all levels, including through regional climate weeks, can play a catalytic role in capacity building. While processes exist, and are being further developed, to engage stakeholders in capacity building efforts at the global level, ways to act and report on results are also essential.

WHAT NEXT?

2020 was meant to signal a shift from negotiating climate change, to implementing responses. The COVID 19 pandemic has, however, created considerable uncertainty. The delay caused by the pandemic could affect the work of some of the bodies – the PCCB workplan for 2021-2024, for instance, was to be finalised at COP26, and the postponement of COP26 could have an impact on its adoption and implementation.

Once recovery begins, enablers like the provision of capacity building can play a catalysing role in kick-starting activity on the ground. However, any new directions that these activities take will depend on the signals from the global negotiations, to funders and implementers alike. The beginning of the implementation of the Paris Agreement could be a good opportunity to change the past paradigm of fragmented and short-lived capacity building.

ANNEX I: DECISIONS RELATED TO CAPACITY BUILDING

UNFCCC

Article 6

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

In carrying out their commitments under Article 4, paragraph 1 (i), the Parties shall:

(a) Promote and facilitate at the national and, as appropriate, subregional and regional levels, and in accordance with national laws and regulations, and within their respective capacities:

- (i) the development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects;
- (ii) public access to information on climate change and its effects;
- (iii) public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses; and
- (iv) training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel;

(b) existing bodies:

- (i) the development and exchange of educational and public awareness material on climate change and its effects; and
- (ii) the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national institutions and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries.

Article 9

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

...

2. Under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties, and drawing upon existing competent international bodies, this body shall:

...

- (d) Provide advice on scientific programmes, international cooperation in research and development related to climate change, as well as on ways and means of supporting endogenous capacity-building in developing countries;

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Article 10

All Parties... shall:

...

(b) Formulate, implement, publish and regularly update national and, where appropriate, regional programmes containing measures to mitigate climate change and measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change;

...

(ii) Parties included in Annex I shall submit information on action under this Protocol, including national programmes, in accordance with Article 7; and other Parties shall seek to include in their national communications, as appropriate, information on programmes which contain measures that the Party believes contribute to addressing climate change and its adverse impacts, including the abatement of increases in greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancement of and removals by sinks, capacity building and adaptation measures;

(c) Cooperate in the promotion of effective modalities for the development, application and diffusion of, and take all practicable steps to promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, the transfer of, or access to, environmentally sound technologies, know-how, practices and processes pertinent to climate change, in particular to developing countries, including the formulation of policies and programmes for the effective transfer of environmentally sound technologies that are publicly owned or in the public domain and the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector, to promote and enhance the transfer of, and access to, environmentally sound technologies;

(d) Cooperate in scientific and technical research and promote the maintenance and the development of systematic observation systems and development of data archives to reduce uncertainties related to the climate system, the adverse impacts of climate change and the economic and social consequences of various response strategies, and promote the development and strengthening of endogenous capacities and capabilities to participate in international and intergovernmental efforts, programmes and networks on research and systematic observation, taking into account Article 5 of the Convention;

(e) Cooperate in and promote at the international level, and, where appropriate, using existing bodies, the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national capacity building, in particular human and institutional capacities and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries, and facilitate at the national level public awareness of, and public access to information on, climate change. Suitable modalities should be developed to implement these activities

through the relevant bodies of the Convention, taking into account Article 6 of the Convention;

PARIS AGREEMENT

Article 11

1. Capacity-building under this Agreement should enhance the capacity and ability of developing country Parties, in particular countries with the least capacity, such as the least developed countries, and those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, such as small island developing States, to take effective climate change action, including, inter alia, to implement adaptation and mitigation actions, and should facilitate technology development, dissemination and deployment, access to climate finance, relevant aspects of education, training and public awareness, and the transparent, timely and accurate communication of information.
2. Capacity-building should be country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, and foster country ownership of Parties, in particular, for developing country Parties, including at the national, subnational and local levels. Capacity-building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building activities under the Convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive.
3. All Parties should cooperate to enhance the capacity of developing country Parties to implement this Agreement. Developed country Parties should enhance support for capacity-building actions in developing country Parties.
4. All Parties enhancing the capacity of developing country Parties to implement this Agreement, including through regional, bilateral and multilateral approaches, shall regularly communicate on these actions or measures on capacity-building. Developing country Parties should regularly communicate progress made on implementing capacity-building plans, policies, actions or measures to implement this Agreement.
5. Capacity-building activities shall be enhanced through appropriate institutional arrangements to support the implementation of this Agreement, including the appropriate institutional arrangements established under the Convention that serve this Agreement. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement shall, at its first session, consider and adopt a decision on the initial institutional arrangements for capacity-building.

Article 12

Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.

DECISIONS

Decisions related to capacity building can be found [here](#).

Decisions related to the Doha Work Programme/ACE can be found [here](#).

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